

Message Text

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R 281520Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8628
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SAN SALVADOR 3302

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, ES
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT: MAY 1978

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOR GOES, EVENTS IN EL SALVADOR BEGAIN
AUSPICIOUSLY IN MAY WITH HOLDING OF MAY 1 LABOR DAY DEMONSTRATION, COMPLETE WITH GOES APPROVAL, REMOVAL OF UNIFORMED TROOPS FROM DEMONSTRATION AREA AND THE MOST PEACEFUL MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION IN RECENT YEARS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE REMAINDER OF THE MONTH WAS, AT BEST, DOWNHILL. ATTEMPTED DIALOGUES BETWEEN THE GOES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY BUT SEPARATELY, WITH OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES, MET WITH LITTLE OR NO SUCCESS. LABOR PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY WITH THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE MONTH. MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENTS WERE KIDNAPPING EARLY MORNING OF MAY 14 OF TWO WEALTHY SALVADORAN BUSINESSMEN (SEE SAN SALVADOR 2367) AND KIDNAPPING OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN FUJIO MATSUMOTO EVENING OF MAY 17 (SEE SAN SALVADOR 2463). PRESIDENT ROMERO AGAIN RESTRAINED
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GOES SECURITY FORCES FROM OVER-REACTING AGAINST TERRORIST GROUPS. PRESIDENT HELD SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH CABINET AND TOP LEADERSHIP OF MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES BUT WITH NO APPARENT SOLUTIONS REACHED. AT MONTH'S END, ALL THREE STILL BEING HELD FOR HUGE RANSOMS (APPROXIMATELY U.S. DOLS 5 MILLION) BEING DEMANDED FOR SALVADORAN CAPTIVES AND SERIES OF POLITICAL DEMANDS PLUS MONEY BEING ASKED FOR MATSUMOTO. LACK OF POSITIVE GOES ACTION BEING

DEPLORED ON ALL SIDES. SOME SAY U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY
DETECTING STRONG GOES RESPONSE, OTHERS FEEL GOES SIMPLY
NOT COMPETENT TO HANDLE SITUATION. EL SALVADOR'S ECONOMIC
SITUATION DETERIORATING RAPIDLY DUE TO MATSUMOTO KIDNAPPING
AND MANY MAJOR INVESTORS, INCLUDING JAPANESE, GERMAN AND
U.S., SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING MOVE TO MORE STABLE AREAS.
GOES STILL PRESSING FIVE-YEAR PLAN OF SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOP-
MENT "BIENESTAR PARA TODOS" AS SOLUTION TO EL SALVADOR'S
PROBLEMS, BUT THIS IS LONG-RANGE PLAN THAT WILL NOT SOLVE
OR ALLEVIATE PRESENT CRISIS SITUATION. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REPRESENTATIVES, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARIES MARK
SCHNEIDER AND SALLY SHELTON, VISITED EL SALVADOR
MAY 10-12 AT INVITATION OF GOES TO HEAR GOES VERSION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS PICTURE. AGAIN WORDS, LONG-RANGE
PROGRAMS OF GOES AND SOME MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT
HIERARCHY APPEARED IMPRESSIVE AND CONVINCING. ON OTHER HAND,
EQUALLY APPARENT THAT SOME VIOLATIONS OF BASIC HUMAN
RIGHTS STILL BEING CARRIED OUT EITHER WITH BLESSING
OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCENCE OF GOES HIGH COMMAND. AT
MONTH'S END, PRESIDENT ROMERO AND GOES APPEAR TO BE
IN TROUBLE ON MOST FRONTS. LEFTIST GROUPS DEFINITELY
ON OFFENSIVE, LEGITIMATE OPPOSITION TAKING ADVANTAGE OF
GOES PROBLEMS, AND PRESIDENT AND GOES APPARENTLY
UNCERTAIN HOW TO ACT OR REACH. END SUMMARY.

1. GENERAL SITUATION: PRESIDENT ROMERO AND GOES CONTINUE
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TO PUBLICIZE THEIR PLAN "BIENESTAR PARA TODOS" AS SOLUTION
TO THE MANY PROBLEMS FACING EL SALVADOR. PLAN BASICALLY
SOUND AND MIGHT PROVIDE FOR LONG-RANGE SOCIOECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT. GENERAL CONSENSUS HOWEVER IS THAT "PLAN" IS
TOO LITTLE TOO LATE AND IN MANY PARTS TOTALLY UNREALISTIC
IN TERMS OF CAPITAL AVAILABLE, PRESENTLY AND POTENTIALLY,
TO BE PUT INTO EFFECT. U.S. STILL HAS SERIOUS DOUBTS OF GOES
ADHERENCE TO BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE IN EL SALVADOR
AND GOES ACQUIESCENCE IN VISIT OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARIES
SCHNEIDER AND SHELTON WAS ON PART OF GOES, UNORGANIZED AND, AT
BEST, WEAK ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THIS OPINION. PRESIDENT AND GOES ARE
INCREASINGLY REAPING REPUTATION IN EL SALVADOR
AND REST OF WORLD AS INCAPABLE OF ENSURING STABILITY
AND COMBATING TERRORISM. HOW LONG PRESIDENT CAN
CONTINUE APPARENT DO-NOTHING POSTURE IN FACE OF
CONTINUED KIDNAPPINGS, INCLUDING FOR FIRST TIME NON-
SALVADORANS, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. COUP RUMORS ARE DAILY
CONVERSATION, BUT RUMORS DO NOT INCLUDE SOLUTION TO
EXISTING PROBLEMS. FAMILIES OF KIDNAPPED SALVADORANS
EXPECTED TO PAY REQUESTED RANSOM (MENDEZ NOVOA RELEASED
JUNE 9; SOL MEZA JUNE 21, WITH REPORTEDLY CLOSE TO U.S.
DOLLARS MILLION PAID IN RANSOMS) GIVING TERRORISTS SUBSTANTIAL

QAR CHEST TO FINANCE FUTURE OPERATIONS. MATSUMOTO
KIDNAPPING BEING EXPLOITED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES AND
CREATING ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION AND FEAR THROUGHOUT FOREIGN
BUSINESS COMMUNITY (PARTICULARLY JAPANESE, GERMAN AND U.S.,
WHO WERE SPECIFICALLY LABELED AS "IMPERIALISTS" IN
KIDNAPPERS' COMMUNIQUE). JAPANESE EMBASSY HAS STATED THAT
THEY ARE ENCOURAGING ALL JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN AND DEPENDENTS
WHO CAN DO SO TO LEAVE EL SALVADOR. EXODUS OF GERMAN AND
U.S. BUSINESSMEN STILL RELATIVELY SMALL BUT WILL STILL HAVE
CERTAIN ADVERSE ECONOMIC IMPACT. IF THERE ARE ADDITIONAL
SUCCESSFUL TERRORIST ACTIONS AGAINST FOREIGN BUSINESS COMMUNITY,
WHOLESALE DEPARTURES OF BOTH PERSONNEL AND FOREIGN
INVESTMENT MAY WELL RESULT. ECONOMICALLY POWERFUL NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (ANEP) UNUSUALLY QUIET IN
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FACE OF RECENT TERRORIST EVENTS BUT MEMBERS REPORTEDLY GROWING
INCREASINGLY IMPATIENT WITH INABILITY OF GOES TO COPE
WITH TERRORIST PROBLEMS. GROWING CONSENSUS THAT
PRESIDENT MUST TAKE MORE POSITIVE ACTION AGAINST
TERRORISTS OR JEOPARDIZE HIS OWN POSITION.

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2. CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: THE STRAINED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE GOES DETERIORATED FURTHER DURING THE MONTH OF MAY. ARCHBISHOP ROMERO DENOUNCED WHAT HE CONSIDERED A CAMPAIGN OF DEFAMATION BEING CARRIED OUT BY NATIONAL GUARD AGENTS AGAINST FATHER FABIAN AMAYA, WHOSE PARISH IS IN LAS VUELTAS (DEPARTMENT OF CHALATENANGO), DENYING AS UNTRUE THE CHARGE THAT AMAYA WAS HANDING OUT ARMS TO THE CAMPESINOS. THE GOVERNMENT THEN GOT ITSELF EMBROILED IN AN UNSEEMLY DISPUTE WITH ARCHBISHOP ROMERO BY ASKING HIM TO NAME THE "VENAL JUDGES" HE HAD DENOUNCED IN HIS APRIL 30 SERMON. THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE ASKED ROMERO TO SUBSTANTIATE HIS CHARGES AND THERE WERE RUMBLINGS THAT THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S OFFICE WAS INTERESTED IN THE CASE. IN HIS MAY 14 SERMON, ARCHBISHOP ROMERO STATED THAT IT WAS UP TO THE SUPREME COURT TO INVESTIGATE THE CHARGES OF "VENAL JUDGES" AND ALSO OTHER ASPECTS OF WHAT HE CALLED THE "GENERAL BREAKDOWN IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN OUR COUNTRY." IN HIS SERMON OF MAY 29, ARCHBISHOP ROMERO DENOUNCED THE "TORTURE" CONFIDENTIAL

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OF FATHER FRANCISCO MEJIA ALVARADO AND OTHER "OUTRAGES" COMMITTED BY NATIONAL GUARD AGENTS IN THE CONVENT OF CINQUERA. HE ALSO DENIED GOVERNMENT CHARGES THAT STEFAN ANTONIO TURCIOS CORPEN, FORMALLY DETAINED BY THE COURTS ON MAY 23 FOR ALLEGEDLY HAVING DISSEMINATED FPL AND FECCAS-UTC PROPAGANDA (SEE SAN SALVADOR A-56), WAS STILL A SEIMARY STUDENT, STATING THAT HE HAD BEEN ONE UNTIL 1972.

3. GOES AND OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES: SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MNR), GUILLERMO UNGO, WAS CALLED FOR PRIVATE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ROMERO IN EARLY MAY. UNGO STATED THAT PRESIDENT INDICATED DESIRE TO REACH SOME SORT OF ACCORD WITH OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES BUT MADE NO CONCRETE PROPOSAL. UNGO SUBSEQUENTLY STATED TO EMBOFFS THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO FOLLOW UP TO THIS INITIAL MEETING DURING MAY. SEVERAL DAYS FOLLOWING UNGO MEETING, PRESIDENT ROMERO AND VICE-PRESIDENT ASTACIO HELD MEETING WITH LEADERSHIP OF LARGEST OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTY, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (PDC). THIS MEETING APPARENTLY AT INITIATIVE OF PDC AND ENCOURAGED BY NEW ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO EL SALVADOR WHO IS HIMSELF A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT. PDC LEADERSHIP STATED THEY FELT INITIAL MEETING HAD GONE QUITE WELL BUT NO SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS REACHED AT FIRST MEETING. PDC PRESENTED PRESIDENT AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT WITH LIST OF PROPOSALS WHICH COULD FORM BASIS FOR FUTURE DIALOGUE. PRESIDENT APPARENTLY COUNTERED BY REQUESTING THAT

PDC LEADERSHIP FIRST BE BRIEFED BY MINISTER OF PLANNING REYES ON "BIENESTAR PARA TODOS" DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND THEN CONTINUE DIALOGUE ON OUTSTANDING POLITICAL ISSUES. PDC LEADERSHIP FELT THIS WAS SOME FORM OF MANEUVER ON PART OF GOES AND INSISTED ON CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINUATION OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE PRIOR TO BRIEFING BY REYES. AT END OF MONTH, GOES STILL ASKING FOR PDC BRIEFING FIRST AND DIALOGUE LATER, WITH PDC REJECTING THIS APPROACH. PDC LEADERSHIP STILL HOPEFUL THAT MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE CAN BE UNDERTAKEN WITH PDC EVENTUALLY ASSUMING POSSIBLE ROLE OF LOYAL OPPOSITION.

4. LABOR DISTURBANCES: THE MAY 1 PARADE AND MEETING ORIGINALLY SPONSORED BY THE PREDOMINANTLY COMMUNIST CONFEDERATION OF SALVADORAN WORKERS (CUTS) CAME OFF PEACEFULLY AND WITH NO SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS REPORTED. THE GOES HAD ORIGINALLY GIVEN PERMISSION TO HOLD THE MEETING AND DURING MAY 1 UNIFORMED POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES WERE CONFINED TO BARRACKS (ON AN ALERT STATUS) UPON THUS LESSENING CHANCES FOR A CONFRONTATION (SEE SAN SAL-

VADOR 23137). THE POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY BLOC (BPR) CLAIMED TO HAVE HELD DEMONSTRATIONS OF SHORT DURATION IN TEN SALVADORAN TOWNS DURING MAY 1, BUT IF IT DID SO, THE DEMONSTRATIONS WERE APPARENTLY WITHOUT INCIDENT. ON MAY 9 THE UNION AT THE TEXTILE FACTORY INCA (A SCENE OF NUMEROUS LABOR DISTURBANCES IN THE PAST) IN SANTA ANA DENOUNCED THE ARREST ON APRIL 27 BY THE NATIONAL GUARD OF LUIS ALONSO GALDAMEZ, ONE OF THE UNION'S MEMBERS. COMPLAINTS OF UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES AND HARASSMENT OF UNION MEMBERS APPEARED IN THE OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER "LA CRONICA" AGAINST THE FIRMS OF EAGLE INTERNATIONAL, EMPRESA GOLDTREE LIEVES S.A., FABRICA INDUSTRIAS TOPAZ S.A., AND "DESTILERIA SALVADORENA." MEANWHILE THE STRIKE OF MANY WORKERS BELONGING TO THE UNITED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS (SUTC) THAT HAD BEGUN ON APRIL 18 (SEE SAN SALVADOR 1978) CONTINUED DURING THE MONTH OF MAY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 SAN SALVADOR 3302

5. CHRONOLOGY OF OPPOSITION, TERRORST, AND
SECURITY FORCES ACTIVITIES:

MAY 2 - THE OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER "LA CRONICA"
ANNOUNCED THAT IT WAS DONATING NEWSPAPER SPACE TO
THE "SALVADORAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS", WHICH
IT EMPHASIZED HAD "ABSOLUTELY NO CONNECTION WITH
THE DEMOGOGOC CAMPAIGN ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTED BY
THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER." THE
MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION HAS NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED
BUT ITS SECRETARY FOR CORRESPONDENCE IS LIC.
MARIANELLA GARCIA VILLAS, WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC).

MAY 2 - JOSE ANTONIO REYES, ARRESTED IN SANTA
ANA FOR ELLEGEDLY DISTRIBUTING SUBVERSIVE PROPAGANDA,
WAS TURNED OVER TO THE COURTS FOR POSSIBLE INDICTMENT.

MAY 3 - FELIX GUILLERMO SALGUERO ARGUETA AND
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ANDRES VILLALTA WERE ARRESTED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD
FOR ALLEGED POSSESSION OF ARMS, EXPLOSIVES AND FALSE
DOCUMENTS.

MAY 4 - LUIS ANTONIO MOZO AND JOSE PEDRO CEDILLOS,
BOTH MEMBERS OF THE ANTI-GOES TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
"ANDES 21 DE JUNION," WERE ARRESTED IN SENSUNTEPEQUE
BY AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING
LAW OF PUBLIC ORDER.

MAY 5 - UNITED POPULAR ACTION FRONT (FAPU)

GAVE UP OCCUPATION OF RED CROSS OFFICE IN SANTA ANA, HAVING TAKEN OVER OFFICE ON APRIL 28 (SAN SALVADOR 2237).

MAP6 - IN A SHOOT-OUT IN BUS TERMINAL IN CITY OF SAN VICENTE, ISABEL RODRIGUEZ, A SUSPECTED BPR MEMBER, AND JUAN CARLOS FLORES CARCAMO, AN AGENT OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, WERE KILLED.

MAY 7 - A BOMB EXPLODED OUTSIDE SANTA ANA RESIDENCES OF CHIEF CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE DR. ANTONIO BERDUGO, CAUSING EXTENSIVE PROPERTY DAMAGE.

MAY 8 - BOMBS REPORTEDLY PLANTED BY THE LEFTIST REVOLUTIONARY ARMY OF THE PEOPLE (ERP) EXPLODED NEAR THE SAN MIGUEL RESIDENCE OF DEPUTY-ELECT ANDRES PINEDA CHICAS AND THE SAN SALVADOR RESIDENCES OF DEPUTY COL. MARIO SEBASTIAN HERNANDEZ SEGURA AND DEPUTY-ELECT BENJAMIN WILFRIDO NAVARETTE. THERE WERE NO PEOPLE INJURED.

MAY 10 - FAPU GAVE UP OCCUPATION OF SAN SALVADOR
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OFFICE OF THE RED CROSS (SAN SALVADOR 2315).

MAY 10 - DANIEL ALEMAN TORRES, OSCAR MAURICIO HERNANDEZ AND JOSE MARIO MENDOZA WERE ARRESTED BY NATIONAL GUARD FOR HAVING COMMITTED A SERIES OF ROBBERIES AND ASSAULTS, INCLUDING A ROBBERY OF AN AGENT OF THE NATIONAL GUARD. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TERRITORIAL FORCES IN SAN MIGULE AREA HAD REPORTEDLY ENGAGED IN SIMILAR PRACTICES.

MAY 12 - MARIA CONCEPCION PEREZ DE BELTRAN, ACCUSED OF HAVING VIOLATED THE LAW OF PUBLIC ORDER, WAS SET FREE BY THE COURTS FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE.

MAY 15 - MEMBERS OF THE LEFTIST REVOLUTIONARY ARMY OF THE PEOPLE (ERP) PLACED ERP LAG NEAR SUPREME COURT BUILDING IN SAN SALVADOR AND THEN SPRAYED FRONT OF BUILDING WITH AUTOMATIC RIFLE FIRE, CAUSING SOME PROPERTY DAMAGE BUT NO INJURIES (SAN SALVADOR 2402).

MAY 17 - A GROUP CALLING ITSELF "COMMITTEE OF SOLIDARITY WITH POLITICAL PRISONERS AND DISAPPEARED PERSONS" REOCCUPIED SAN SALVADOR OFFICE OF THE RED CROSS (SAN SALVADOR 2462).

MAY 17 - AN ARMED CLASH BETWEEN "CAMPEÑINOS," REPORTEDLY LED BY FECCAS-UTC, AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD NEAR CITY OF ZACATECOLUCA RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF TWO ALLEGED FPL MEMBERS. (SAN SALVADOR 2487) JOSE SANTOS TORRES URIAS WAS LATER ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY HAVING TAKEN PART IN THE CLASH. HE WAS RELEASED BY THE COURTS ON MAY 29 FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE.

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MAY 17 - RELATIVES OF CARLOS BORROMES RIVAS CLAIMED THAT A GROUP APPEARING TO BE AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ARRESTED HIM ON MAY 9 WITHOUT LEGAL GROUNDS FOR DOING SO AND THAT HIS WHEREABOUTS WERE UNKNOWN.

MAY 18 - "ANDES 2 DE JUNIO" DENOUNCED THE ARREST IN SAN SALVADOR OF ONE OF ITS MEMBERS, HIPOLITO ROLANDO MARTINEZ.

MAY 19 - BENJAMIN ANTONIO BARAHONA, ARRESTED IN CINCUERA (DEPARTMENT OF CABANAS) FOR HAVING ALLEGEDLY DISTRIBUTED "SUBVERSIVE" PROPAGANDA, WAS TURNED OVER TO THE COURTS IN SAN SALVADOR. THE OPPOSITION "LA CRONICA" CLAIMED THAT HE AND JOSE SANTOS TORRES URIAS (SEE ABOVE) "SHOWED EVIDENT SIGNS OF TORTURE."

MAY 20 - A BOMB EXPLODED OUTSIDE THE USULUTAN RESIDENCE OF DEPUTY-ELECT DR. RENE AREVALO IBARRA.

MAY 22 FIVE TO SIX MEN, PRESUMABLY MEMBERS OF THE FPL, SHOT AND KILLED JOAQUIN CASTRO CORDOVA, A TEACHER AND A MEMBER OF ORDEN, NEAR EEPAINAL. THE ASSAILANTS REPORTEDLY PLACED A FLAG OVER CASTRO'S BODY BEARING THE SYMBOL AND LETTERS OF THE FPL.

MAY 23 - A GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN MEN, PRESUMABLY MEMBERS OF THE FPL, ASSAULTED A FARM NEAR TECOLUCA (DEPARTMENT OF SAN VICENTE). THE ASSAILANTS SHOT AND KILLED A WATCHMAN AND ROBBED MONEY FROM THE OWNER OF FARM.
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MAY 31 - IN SAN SALVADOR AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, NATIONAL POLICE, AND THE POLICIA DE HACIENDA SURROUNDED THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF COMMERCE (ENCO) AND THE NATIONAL CENTER OF ARTS DURING THE EARLY MORNING HOURS. AGENTS REPORTEDLY CONDUCTED A SEARCH FOR EXPLOSIVES AND SPOKESMEN FOR SECURITY FORCES STATED THAT OPERATION WAS CARRIED OUT TO PREVENT A RUMORED OCCUPATION OF BUILDINGS OR THE SETTING OFF OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES. STUDENT SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY STATED THAT OPERATION WAS CARRIED OUT TO INTIMIDATE THE STUDENT BODY. DEVINE

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